

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 28, 2020

The Honorable Jerrold Nadler
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jim Jordan
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Nadler and Ranking Member Jordan:

I am writing to express my strongest support for extending the U.S. Bankruptcy Court in the Eastern District of Tennessee, located in Greeneville. Upon retirement of the current judge planned for September 30, 2020, the judgeship will cease to exist. Tennesseans – like all Americans – are facing difficult and uncertain economic circumstances during the coronavirus pandemic, and the need for this judgeship in Northeast Tennessee is more apparent now than ever. Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request.

The U.S. Bankruptcy Court in the Eastern District of Tennessee was one of a number of temporary judgeships created by Congress in 1992. This temporary court was last extended by S.1821, the Temporary Bankruptcy Judgeships Extension Act of 2011, and is currently set to lapse upon the current judge's retirement at the end of September 2020. Unfortunately, the Administrative Office of U.S. Courts didn't include this judgeship in its most recent recommendation for courts to extend, leaving Northeast Tennessee vulnerable at a time of significant financial distress.

Since the Administrative Office of U.S. Court's March 2019 Judicial Conference Judgeship Recommendation, regional need for this court has increased exponentially. From 2018 to 2019, filings in the Greeneville Division increased 21.7%. Due to the economic distress caused by COVID-19, it's very likely this division will have significantly more bankruptcy cases. Should this judgeship end, its cases will be reassigned to the remaining three Eastern Tennessee courts located in Chattanooga and/or Knoxville. I am gravely concerned that this will result in prolonged cases. For many residents of my district, reaching the nearest bankruptcy court will be a 4-hour roundtrip to Knoxville and 7-hour roundtrip to Chattanooga. It is also extremely problematic that Northeast Tennessee will not have similar access to emergency hearings to halt foreclosures and injunctions.

Northeast Tennessee will be severely disadvantaged should the U.S. Bankruptcy Court located in Greeneville be allowed to lapse on September 30, 2020, and I urge you to extend this judgeship. Thank you for your consideration of this urgent request.

Sincerely,



Phil Roe, M.D.
Member of Congress